

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 21, 2005

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2005–06 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1466

Introduced by Assembly Member Laird
(Coauthors: Senators Battin and Ducheny)

February 22, 2005

An act to add Part 11 (commencing with Section 12999) to Division 6 of the Water Code, relating to water.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1466, as amended, Laird. Tamarisk plant control.

Existing law grants to the Department of Water Resources various duties relating to the supervision of the state's water resources.

This bill would require the department, *in collaboration with other entities*, to ~~undertake~~ *develop* a program to control or eradicate tamarisk plants in the Colorado River watershed.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) Tamarisk is a small tree or large shrub that was imported
- 4 from Eastern Europe in the 1800s for use as windbreaks and
- 5 erosion control.
- 6 (b) Tamarisk is spreading across the West, including covering
- 7 hundreds of thousands of acres in the Colorado River Basin,
- 8 almost entirely along waterways.

(c) Tamarisk easily out-competes native habitat, such as willows and cottonwoods, and has very little habitat value compared to native vegetation.

(d) Because of its delicate and expansive leaf structure, tamarisk on a per-acre basis, takes up and evaporates substantially more water than native vegetation.

(e) Colorado River flows have been very low for the last six years because of increasing human uses and very-low rainfall, and because tamarisk is taking up significantly more water than the native vegetation that it replaces.

(f) If low river flows continue, dwindling reservoir storage will be insufficient to continue historical levels of diversions and diversions will have to be curtailed, with substantial impacts to the economies of the seven states in the Colorado River watershed.

(g) Controlling tamarisk entails a large and costly task, but if it is not undertaken, there will be significant economic and environmental consequences for California and the other basin states.

SEC. 2. Part 11 (commencing with Section 12999) is added to Division 6 of the Water Code, to read:

PART 11. TAMARISK PLANT CONTROL

~~12999. The department shall undertake a program to control or eradicate tamarisk plants in the Colorado River watershed. The program shall include the reestablishment of native vegetation. The program shall be undertaken in cooperation with the other states in the watershed, affected water agencies, and the federal government.~~

12999. The Department of Water Resources, in collaboration with the Department of Food and Agriculture, the Department of Fish and Game, and the Colorado River Board of California, shall develop a program to control or eradicate tamarisk plants in the Colorado River watershed. These state agencies shall develop this program in collaboration with federal agencies, including, but not limited to, the United States Bureau of Reclamation and the United States Bureau of Land Management, for the treatment of tamarisk along the Colorado River watershed. This program shall also be developed in cooperation

1 *with the other states in the watershed and affected water*
2 *agencies. This program shall include the reestablishment of*
3 *native vegetation.*

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